The School Evaluation Rubric (SER)
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The School Evaluation Rubric (SER), created by Ron Nelson and Barbara Ohluns, Arizona State University, is an instrument to increase awareness of the importance of evidence in describing school performance in five areas:

1. School leadership
2. School-wide organizational systems
3. Non-classroom organizational systems
4. Classroom management systems
5. Individual management systems

The SER is a reflective continuum used by school personnel to assess current practices against an established "exemplar." Each of the five systems has key attributes that identify the ideal. To achieve success, the entire staff works together to determine the evidence of performance in each system to achieve consensus as to whether they are beginning, developing, or exemplary in status of performance in each of the five organizational systems.

The SER is administered biennially in the early fall and late spring.   The school leadership team is responsible for leading reflective discussion with the entire staff and to assure that data is used in both discussion and decision-making. Assessment in all five areas of school performance is critical in determining progress toward attaining the key attributes outlined within each organizational management system.

Careful examination of key attributes of each organizational system will lead to the identification of target areas for improvement.   These target areas are termed "service gaps" in the SER process. The nature and extent of the service gaps requires prioritization to begin the process of goal setting, research and study, and strategic planning. Dialogue around the following questions help staff focus on data they consider relevant, important, and useful in decision-making:

1. Are there existing goals within the school improvement plan that address the gaps identified in the SER?
2. What are the sources of evidence that support the identified gaps in practice?
3. What data is necessary to verify our assumptions   about what we believe about student performance?

Once data have been analyzed, goal-setting is the next step. In the goal-setting process, clarity is established about *what* is to be accomplished and goals are written to address the gaps in practice to move the school toward the "exemplar" identified in the SER. Goals are stated in noun phrases to avoid leaping to strategies without sufficient study of practices that best meet the needs of the particular school.   If practices are

identified and selected prior to study, a mismatch between student needs/school culture and selected practice may result.

The gaps (target areas) identified in the analysis of data move the team's efforts toward the study of research-based practices. Review of research, attendance at conferences, site visitations, and other carefully selected activities provide the opportunity for staff to make informed decisions with regard to those practices that best match the school's needs, goals, culture, and student population.

After team study, the goals are translated into strategies. Strategies include action words that move the school team to the implementation phase of the process. This implementation phase includes timelines, resources needed, calculated and strategic professional development, person(s) responsible, and progress monitoring techniques.

The implementation phase is a continuous process of adjustment. Implementation of strategies often brings the realization that change is a highly dynamic and complex process. Change involves many substeps. Schools find that often the sequence of planning takes on a deep analysis that breaks down major tasks into component parts.

Nothing succeeds like success. The School Evaluation Rubric is designed to ensure success for all. It is equally applicable in all schools; it can be used in close alignment with any process for school improvement; progress monitoring is built into the process; it encourages use of data in discussion and decision-making; and it guides the planning process toward exemplary practice.